

based on work in the Albert National Park. On pages 53–54 Verheyen records no fewer than fourteen species perching on hippo, the Hammerkop (*Scopus umbretta*) and Pied Kingfisher (*Ceryle rudis*) apparently both doing so while fishing.

Footnote:— R. Meinertzhagen in *The Birds of Arabia* (1954), p. 471 writes under Crab Plovers: "On Mafia Island I have seen them perched on the backs of basking hippopotami who were themselves asleep in seawater on a coral reef."

## A new name for *Estrilda astrild angolensis* Reichenow

by MELVIN A. TRAYLOR

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In his revision of the Estrildinae, Delacour (1943, *Zoologica*, 28: 69–86) failed to note that *Estrilda astrild angolensis* Reichenow (1902, *Orn. Monatsb.*, 10: 173) is preoccupied by *Estrilda a. angolensis* (*Fringilla angolensis* Linnaeus, 1758, *Syst. Nat.*, ed. 10, 1: 182) when *Uraeginthus* is united with *Estrilda*. For those who follow Delacour's generic revision, a new name is necessary for *E. a. angolensis* Reichenow, and I propose:

*Estrilda astrild malanje* nom. nov.

for *Estrilda astrild angolensis* Reichenow, 1902, preoccupied by *Estrilda angolensis angolensis* (*Fringilla angolensis* Linnaeus, 1758).

## Notes on the taxonomy of the Indigo Birds

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The Indigo Birds are parasitic weavers, sometimes placed in the genus *Hypochoera*, but better included in the genus *Vidua* since their female and non breeding male plumages are very similar to those of other species of *Vidua*. The breeding males are of uniform dark colour varying from matt blackish purple to glossy purple, blue or green with a metallic lustre. The taxonomy of the Indigo Birds and the number of species has always been the subject of much doubt. Sclater (1930) arranged them in five species; Grant and Praed (1949) recognised eight species; Chapin (1954) lists five as occurring or likely to occur in the Congo but adds that there may only be three; Wolters (1960) discusses the possibility of only two species. Whatever the number of species, the uncertainty of how to distinguish females and non breeding males is even greater than the separation of males. Only Grant and Praed (1955) claim that their males are associated with distinguishable females. Characters used to distinguish breeding males are the colour and degree of the metallic gloss, colour of flight feathers, and colour of bill and feet. These characters have been used either separately or in various combinations. The present note arises primarily from an investigation of the position in Central Africa but considers data from other parts of Africa. About 170 breeding males and 40 females from South and Central Africa and Tanganyika were available through the kindness of the Transvaal Museum and the National Museum, Bulawayo to whom I am greatly indebted for the loan of material. The date is analysed firstly by geographical areas.